

U.S. Intelligence Upset By Rivalries

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CPYRGHT

WASHINGTON — From the apogees of its spy satellites to the perigees of its bombproof basement code rooms, the vast U.S. intelligence industry has been going through a wrenching reorganization.

The Central Intelligence Agency, most lampooned and cartooned of all the world's spy outfits, has been rocked by more than 200 reforms. Military intelligence has been consolidated, with a great battering together of brass hats, into a single unit: the Defense Intelligence Agency.

Still, many senators are not convinced that the reforms have gone far enough, and are demanding greater control over the whole James Bond industry.

THE PURPOSE of the reforms, of course, is to improve the quality of intelligence; eliminate rivalries, and prevent another Bay of Pigs — the CIA-sponsored invasion of Cuba which became a bloody fiasco.

While some minor rivalries may have been scotched, however, a major rivalry has emerged. Our intelligence apparatus has sprouted two heads, the CIA and the DIA, which often get in one another's way.

In theory, the CIA is supposed to be the final sieve through which all intelligence should pass before reaching the President. It is upon this information that he keeps abreast of world affairs and makes his policy judgments.

Yet the DIA increasingly is catching the President's eye. Moreover, it is so dominated by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara that it has a tendency to produce intelligence that supports his views. Its reports generally have reflected his optimistic outlook on the Viet Nam war, rather than the pessimistic possibilities.

THOSE in the Pentagon who disagree with an intelligence analysis, of course, are free to state their views as a footnote. But it takes a bold man to challenge McNamara's attitudes too frequently.

His interest in economy, no secret to his intelligence officers, has led to more comfortable appraisals than conservative military men would make. They prefer to judge the Communist threat by its capability for aggression rather than someone's estimate of its intentions.

The Secretary of Defense, a formidable figure inside the policy-making councils, also has had an intimidating effort on the CIA director.

The former director, John McCone, a man of strong views, clashed with McNamara and had a cactus touch with Congress. McCone saw the DIA, under McNamara, poaching on his territory, and was skeptical of its effectiveness in the more shadowy areas of intelligence work.

In his view, the military were not always attuned to the nuances of politics in faraway places. They didn't have the linguists nor the political sophisticates. They also weren't structured to provide the "cover" so necessary for agents.

McCONE was replaced by Admiral William (Red) Raborn, who had been a submarine specialist under McNamara's command. While less abrasive in dealing with McNamara, the admiral was also less willing to stand up to him.

Raborn was succeeded with unbecoming haste by

Richard Helms, a career man, who is a sophisticated spymaster but naive political operator. He got off to an inauspicious start by attacking Sen. J. William Fulbright, D-Ark., in a "letter to the editor."

Even as this letter bubbled in Helms's face, he wrote another, supporting Sen. Thomas J. Dodd, D-Conn., in his troubles with the Senate Ethics Committee. With painful obviousness, the letter was written the same day that the Senate was supposed to vote on whether to supervise the CIA's activities more closely.

Dodd, a staunch CIA supporter in the past, had executed an indelicate switch in midstream and had climbed into Sen. Eugene McCarthy's anti-CIA boat. McCarthy, D-Minn., also happens to be a member of the Senate Ethics Committee, which is sitting in judgment upon Dodd.

BUT after Dodd got his last-minute CIA letter from Helms, the senator from Connecticut changed boats again and skipped out on McCarthy. Meanwhile, Helms's inept letter writing has plunged his political rating down to zero.

Which of the rival, often overlapping, intelligence setups is most effective? The DIA has received less unfavorable publicity, has a better grasp of the military situation. But the CIA is better staffed and organized to understand the political subtleties around the world.

Intelligence is vital to the security of any nation. It can at times be an ugly, no-holds-barred business. However, it is a necessary one, never more necessary than in this age of cold war. But it is the most difficult business in the world to conduct.